THE PLAIN MANS WAY OF WORSHIP AND PRACTICE:

OR,

Directions whereby they that are unlearned may know how to behave themſelves, in their Reſpective Duties towards God and all Men.

Fitted for the meaneſt Capacities.

The third Edition Corrected and Enlarged.

Eccleſiaſtes 12. v. 13.
Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole Duty of Man.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. M.* for *J. Martyn*, and are to be ſold by *Maurice Atkins*, at the *Half-Moon* in St. *Pauls* Church-yard, 1673.

THE
PREFACE.

ABout ſix Months ſince, notwithſtanding the diſcouragements of my Education, my poor Eſtate, and almoſt decrepit old Age; I adventured to give a plain and honeſt account, as in the preſence of God, of ſuch things, as upon mature conſideration ſeemed to me of great uſe towards my having peace of mind in this World, and aſſurance of happineſs in that which is to come:

and which I therefore thought might alſo be in like manner beneficial to others. At that time I made my ſelf a Debter, by promiſing that if I found any good done by my attempt, I would offer ſome other things to my Generation, and be farther a Fool for Chriſts ſake. *In reference whereto being made to believe, that what was then written, has been by Gods grace uſeful unto divers poor Souls; in this third Edition, I have thought fit to ſpeak unto the Reader by way of Preface, and in the firſt place to adviſe him, that if he ſeeks for learned* enticing words of mans Wiſdom; *or if he deſire to maintain a Sect or Party, by having* mens perſons in admiration,

ration, (*though they were as* Paul, Apollos, *or* Cephas, *the moſt powerful Preachers, or gifted men in Prayer*) *or indeed labours to be any thing beſides a* Chriſtian, *he would look elſewhere, and not trouble himſelf with reading this Book.* 2. *In the ſecond place I have to admoniſh him; that he would read and conſider the whole Book together, before he judges of any part of it.* 3. *And thirdly, That if his condition be not that of a Husbandman, ſuch as mine is, and thoſe I immediately ſpeak unto, yet that he will not think himſelf therefore unconcerned in the Duties which are laid down: but know that in all likelihood, he is ſomewhat more concerned than they:*

for inſtance, *a Handicraſt*, *Tradeſman*, *or Shop-Keeper*, *has generally more leiſure for reading and prayer*, *and better opportunities of retiring into privacy in order to thoſe duties*, *than the poor Country-man has*; *and we are taught that* to whom much is given, of them much will be required; *beſides*, *in Cities and Towns where Tradeſmen moſtly dwell*, *there is more light and knowledge*, *than in the dark Corners of the Nation where the Huſbandman lives*: *and he* that knows his Maſters will and doth it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes; when he who knew it not ſhall be beaten with few. 4. *In the laſt place*, *I would have the Reader*

Reader to conſider, that he then profits by the reading of this and other Books, not when he has learnt ſomething which he did not know before; but when he is preſwaded to do ſome Duty, which he did not do before: and of this there needs no farther proof than what I ſaid but now of their eſtate, who knew their Lords will and did it not, *and that ſaying of the Apoſtle, that* the Devils do believe, *and yet are Devils ſtill: nay ſhall have greater damnation for that their knowledge: for however at our Aſſizes the Malefactor eſcapes for his Clergie, and skill in reading; at the great Day of Judgment the pro-*

ceedings of God will be quite contrary; and he who ſinned againſt moſt light, ſhall beyond others be caſt into utter darkneſs.

THE

THE PLAIN MANS WAY OF WORSHIP AND PRACTICE.

Sect. 1. I Am a poor Husband-man, and many times heretofore (in the days of my strength) have upon occasions, help't sundry of my Neighbours, at day-

day-work, and now, that my Children are grown up in no better condition than that of a Renter on a Farm, which I manage by their labour and my own: Yet bred up, I bleſs my God, not only to read, but to write alſo, and over and above to ſome ſmattering in Learning, as having been once deſigned to be a poor Scholar in the Univerſity. For my honeſt Father, ſeeing many ways and many times the great inconveniencies in himſelf of being illiterate, took great care to prevent them in us his Children; and being I could read a little more diſtinctly and readily than any of my Brothers and Siſters took moſt [illegible] read; and

and I obſerving him pleaſed with it, had the grace more and more to pleaſe him in this way, and in pleaſing him, very much to benefit my ſelf, as ſince I have found: for in his hearing at leiſure times, the Winter-night times eſpecially, I read over not only the ſingle and double Pſalter, but the whole Bible alſo more than once; and thereby got into my head, even when I thought of no ſuch matter, the whole Hiſtory in a manner of that Sacred Book, to my great delight, as well as profit ever ſince.

Sect. 2. The means, which, being the third Brother, was left me by my Father at his Death, together with that, which

which by Gods bleſſing upon my honeſt labours, I have hitherto enjoyed, was and is very ſmall. But ſuch as it was and is, I have been always reſolved, by Gods Grace, to make it ſerve, and to live under it too; which thing I have ever done, I thank my God moſt heartily. And ſo have ſpent my days in great peace and quietneſs. For when now I write this, I have almoſt finiſhed the ſixty fifth year of my life. And, becauſe I ſeem to my ſelf to have gained, eſpecially in my later time, ſome good Experiments as to right believing and godly walking, ſuch as may perhaps be uſeful to my Children and Neighbours, when I am gone; I have

have thought good, after due advice, here to ſet them down: and in the firſt place, to mind my ſelf as well as them, How I came to a reſolution and ſetlement of my mind, in the ſeveral differences, which now paſs, in matters of Faith.

Sect. 3. For in theſe laſt thirty years of my Age, by reaſon of the troubles and diſtractions amongſt us, I have had many doubts about my Religion; and, Fool that I was! thought, by hearing and ſeeing what every party could ſay for themſelves, to have ſeen where had been moſt truth, and there to have fixed. But clean contrary to my expectation, by this means I became

came more unſetled than ever. And no marvel; For how ſhould I, being but one, and no way enabled by Education to ſearch to the bottom of ſuch differences? How, I ſay, ſhould ſuch a ſimple man as I, be able to judge and determine of them? Sometimes I thought of applying my ſelf to Miniſters and Church-men: But they, I ſaw, were divided among themſelves, as much, nay more than any. And, it ſo happening, that in the Pariſh where I was a Renter about four and twenty years ago, there were two at one and the ſame time; the one an old man, ejected as a Malignant; and another youngerly Gentleman of the Preſbyterian way, who was

was ſetled in his place by the Committees; I ſaw clearly, that to go to either of theſe, was not to reſolve my doubts, but to increaſe them; or elſe, by a blind ſubmiſſion of my underſtanding, to put an unreaſonable end to them. Inſtead therefore of this way, I began to confer with my Neighbours, and thoſe of the ſame condition with my ſelf. But I ſoon ſaw my Errour, for none of us well underſtanding the things that we talkt of, we wearied our ſelves to no purpoſe, and in the end fell on quarrelling one with another, very unbecomingly and very dangerouſly. And I remember very well, how that towards the end of the War,

I happening to talk with the Miller of our Town, who called himſelf an Independent, about the Congregational Way, as he termed it; and ſeeming to the By-ſtanders to be more in the right than he; without any more ado, this my good Neighbour ſtrikes me over the face, ſaying, *The Lord rebuke thee and thy carnal reaſoning*; and ſo left me. Being, as I ſay, thus diſappointed of my hopes of benefiting my ſelf by Conference with my Neighbours, I fell next, as far as my little ſtock would reach, to buy the Books that came out; and, where that failed, to borrow them. But here I was more confounded than ever; finding new differences ſtarted,

ſtarted, that I never dream't of, and obſerving my ſelf ſtill inclined to be of his Opinion, that I read laſt. Which made it plain to me, that I ſhould never have done my doubting, till I had done with my reading. Being in this perplexity, I in great diſcontent laid aſide all my Books, except my Bible; and fell diligently, as I could get time from my work in the Week-days, and eſpecially on the Lords day, to the reading of that; Ever when I met places of remarkable concernment to me in my condition, writing them down by themſelves in a paper, that afterwards I might the better conſider of them. But though I reſolved to confine my ſelf wholly

wholly to the *Bible*, yet having heard of a Book called, *The whole Duty of Man*, and that that Book was deſigned for the uſe of private Families, I reſolved to look into it, and was reſolved after peruſal to keep it, becauſe that it did all along, without engaging me to any party, only call upon me to the univerſally acknowledged Duty of Piety and Vertue; and as I hear, That that Book is ſo very full, that the moſt Learned do admire it, ſo I do find this benefit, that the meaneſt may underſtand it.

Sect. 4. The places, which at firſt I took eſpecial notice of, and which encouraged me to a more diligent inquiry, were theſe; *John* 5. *verſ.* 39.

Search

Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which teſtifie of me. 2 Tim. 3. v. 15, 16, 17. *From a Child thou haſt known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wiſe unto ſalvation, through Faith, which is in Chriſt Jeſus. All Scripture is given by inſpiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in Righteouſneſs; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good works.* Joh. 7. v. 16, 17. *Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, My Doctrine is not mine, but his that ſent me. If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God.* And *James* 1. 5.

If

If any man lack wiſdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it ſhall be given him. Again, Mat. 18. v. 2, 3, 4. *Jeſus called a little Child unto him, and ſet him in the midſt of them, and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoſoever therefore ſhall humble himſelf as this little Child, the ſame is greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.* Having choſen out theſe aforeſaid Scriptures, I ſeemed to my ſelf to be in a certain and direct way to ſatisfaction; the word of truth telling me, that if I ſearcht the Scriptures, in them I might have Eternal Life;

Life; be wiſe unto Salvation, be perfect and throughly furniſh't to all good works; eſpecially, if by a holy Converſation I did the will of God, for then I ſhould know of the Doctrine; and alſo did pray to God for Wiſdom, for it is ſaid, that it ſhould be given me; and alſo did bring the humble temper of a Child, for it is ſaid, *That of ſuch is the Kingdom of God, and he that ſo humbles himſelf, ſhall be greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

sect. 5. Accordingly ſetting my ſelf to walk as cloſely, as I could, to God in Duty, and humbling my ſelf before him, putting aſide, as much as poſſibly I could, all prepoſſeſſion of Opinions

Opinions or Parties, and making my earneſt Prayer, That he, who revealed to Babes thoſe Myſteries, which were hid from the wiſe and prudent (and who was pleaſed to make the firſt diſcoveries of his coming into the World to poor Shepherds, and afterwards made Fiſhermen his Apoſtles) to ſhew me alſo his light and his truth, and direct my goings in the way.

Sect. 6. I proceeded therefore very diligently in reading of the Scriptures, ſtill obſerving my former courſe of noting down in paper ſuch places, as ſeemed likely to contribute to the ſetlement of my mind. Among which, none made a deeper impreſſion on me, than

thoſe

thoſe which expreſt the temper of the Goſpel, and diſpenſation of the Doctrine of it; as *Epheſ* 6. 19. where it is called, *The Goſpel of Peace.* Matth. 22. 37, 38, 39. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength; this is the firſt and great Commandment; And the ſecond is like unto it, Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf. On theſe two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.* Rom. 13. 8. *He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law. For this, Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery, Thou ſhalt not ſteal, Thou ſhalt not kill, Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs, Thou ſhalt not covet; and if there be any other*

Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this, namely, Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf. Love worketh no evil to his neighbour; therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law. 1 Joh. 2. 10. *He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is none occaſion of ſtumbling in him.* Joh. 14. 27. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; Not as the World giveth, give I unto you.* Joh. 13. 34. *A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another. By this ſhall all men know, that ye are my Diſciples, if ye have love one to another.* Heb. 12. 14. *Follow peace with all men and holineſs,*

neſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord. Rom. 16. 17. *I beſeech you, brethren, mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are ſuch ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own belly; and by good words and fair ſpeeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple.* Act. 2. 1. The multitude of Believers are deſcribed to be with one accord in one place, v. 46. *They continued daily with one accord in the Temple.* Joh. 18. 20. *I ſpake openly to the World, I ever taught in the Synagogue and in the Temple, whither the Jews always reſort, and in ſecret have I ſaid nothing.* Matth. 24. 24.

There ſhall ariſe falſe Chriſts, and falſe Prophets, and ſhall ſhew great ſigns and wonders, &c. Wherefore, if they ſhall ſay unto you, Behold he is in the deſart, go not forth: Behold he is in the ſecret chambers, believe it not. Jude v. 18, 19. *There ſhall be mockers in the laſt times, who ſhall walk after their own ungodly luſts; theſe be they, who ſeparate themſelves, ſenſual, having not the Spirit.* Heb. 10. 23. *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our Faith without wavering, &c. not forſaking the aſſembling of our ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is.* Joh. 10. 4. *When the Shepherd putteth forth his own ſheep, he goeth before them, and the ſheep follow him,*

for

for they know his voice; and a ſtranger will they not follow, but will flye from him, for they know not the voice of ſtrangers. Matth. 7. 15. *Beware of falſe Prophets, which come to you in ſheeps cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.* 2 Tim. 3. 1. *In the laſt days perillous times ſhall come. For men ſhall be lovers of themſelves, &c. having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof; from ſuch turn away. For of this ſort are they, which creep into houſes, and lead Captive ſilly women laden with ſins, led away with divers luſts.* 1 Joh. 2. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us:*

But they went out, *that they might be made manifeſt*, *that they were not all of us.* Heb. 13. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves, for they watch for your ſouls.* Heb. 5. 4. *No man taketh this honour to himſelf, but he that is called of God, as was* Aaron. Rom. 10. 11. *How ſhall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how ſhall they hear without a Preacher? and how ſhall they preach except they be ſent?* 1 Cor. 12. 28. *God hath ſet ſome in the Church, firſt Apoſtles, ſecondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, &c. are all Apoſtles? are all Prophets? are all Teachers?*

Sect. 7. Theſe Scriptures being thus placed together; which,

which, whether it happen'd by chance, or by ſome more diſcerning cauſe, I ſhall not inquire; But ſure I am, upon the ſerious reading them over upon a Sabbath-day in the Evening, I ſeemed to ſee much light given in to me towards the clearing of thoſe doubts, which for a long time had perplext and troubled me; which when I perceived, I read them over many and many times, ſtill obſerving ſome new matter of profit, which I diſcovered not before; and therefore I carried my paper about me, ever and anon, as I could get leiſure from my work, both at home and in the field, looking over it, and meditating upon it.

Sect. 8. From thoſe Scriptures, which expreſs the Goſpel temper to be Peace, and Love, and Unity; I ſoon collected, that the way to advance Chriſtian truth, was not likely to be by diſputing and quarrelling, much leſs by fighting and killing: Nay loving one another, being given for ſo infallible a mark, that our Saviour ſays, *All men ſhall know his Diſciples by it*; from thence I took up a ſtedfaſt reſolution, to ſecure my own intereſt at leaſt in this reſpect, to trouble no body with my own Opinions, nor diſquiet them for theirs, unleſs haply they firſt ſhould attempt upon me. For then I never fail to ſay what I can for the Laws, and

and for the walking of me and others according to them; This particularly; That he, who hath the Laws of his ſide, hath always ſomething of true Religion to alledge for himſelf: for inſtance, *Rom.* 13. *Let every Soul be ſubject unto the higher Powers, &c.* and *Heb.* 13. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you, &c.*

Sect. 9. From the advice, to mark them who cauſe diviſions, and to avoid them; I did ſet my ſelf to conſider, how it came about, That, whereas heretofore there was great Unity among Neighbours, and conſent in matters of Religion, now on the contrary, there was ſo much ſtrife and diſſention both in publick and

private. It was manifeſt enough, that the ſpeaking againſt the former ſetlement, and endeavouring to make alterations in the Church and State, were the occaſion of theſe diviſions: And therefore that they, who were active herein, did cauſe them beyond all doubt, and were the perſons, who according to the Apoſtles direction were to be avoided: that is, The Preciſians and Puritans, as they were heretofore called, and now Sectaries and Fanatiques. But on the contrary, obſerving theſe to be a ſort of Godly men, and who were painful in the Miniſtry, and zealous for Reformation; I was a long time ſtagger'd, how poſſibly ſuch

ſuch precious men ſhould fall under the remaining deſcription of the Apoſtle, that they ſerved not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own belly. And in this difficulty I remained, till my bargain proving too hard, I was forced to look out for another; and happened to take a Farm in a Pariſh, where the Benefice was not ſcandalous, and where the Miniſter could not be ſo; I mean, the Means being no more than what the Lay-Parſon would allow, The Miniſter, who was then there, was ſuffered to read the Common-Prayer every Sunday, and was not troubled and ejected for ſo doing. For by Gods wonderful good Providence, thus there it fell out.

In

In the beginning of the year 42. The Curate of the place deceasing, the Impropriatour, being a wealthy, and withal a very honest man, and one that with his Family feared God with all his heart, was resolved by Gods grace to have a man of Parts, as well as Piety, to be his Curate; and to that purpose, having a very good Farm in the Parish, besides the Parsonage, declared his resolution to allow towards worthy serving of the Cure, besides the Parsonage-house and Gardens, and Orchards, full forty pounds *per annum*, without any deduction or payments at all. God directed him to a man, who every way hath answered, and still doth answer

anſwer his godly deſires; One, who having all along found his Patron and Pariſh moſt firm and reſpectful to him, being, ſince the Kings Return, offered a much better Living by the Biſhop, thought fitteſt to excuſe himſelf, and to continue his ſtation. Which the worthy Biſhop did, it ſeems, take ſo well, that ſince, he hath given him a dignity to his Curacy; and all now here is juſt ſo, as moſt deſired to have it. So ſoon therefore as hither I came, the whole Neighbourhood, I perceived, were much more quiet and truly honeſt, than that was from which I came; And, though there was no great talk of godlineſs, there was more love and peace,

peace, and the power of it, then where our young Reformer preacht upon his new lights and the Scepter of Chriſt. After this, looking more narrowly, I obſerved that, where there was a good Living, the old Miniſter generally was put out as a Malignant; but where there was but a poor Curacy (as with us, though a very conſiderable Pariſh for largeneſs) No body was concerned at all to preach up Reformation there; And alſo, that theſe Reformers, and as they called them, Godly Miniſters, though they talkt againſt Drunken Cavaliers, would yet make no ſcruple to come from the Lecture on Market-days, as red as Rooſt-Cocks; and,

and, to my ſeeming, not far from being diſguis'd in Drink. Whereupon I began to ſuſpect, that all was not gold that gliſter'd; and, upon inquiry, found, that moſt of them, who had put others out of their places for being ſcandalous Miniſters, were themſelves ſo one way or other; and from being poor Curates, or broken Tradeſmen, got themſelves into the beſt Livings of the Country, never minding thoſe which were of little value, nor the ſaving of the Souls of them, who lived in ſuch places; Nay, inſtead of doing the work of Miniſters of the Goſpel of Peace, blowing the Trumpet of War, encouraging to Rebellion againſt the Lords

Lords Anointed, and curſing *Meroz* with bitter Curſes, for not helping in that quarrel. In like manner, thoſe, who in the Neighbourhoods were the Leaders and Teachers to them, who were Anabaptiſts, and of the Congregational way, with the reſt, I found them all in a manner to be Men, who had either left their Callings, or their Callings had left them, and were many of them charged to have been very ill Livers, nay to be ſo ſtill, and had moſt of them been Rebels againſt the King. So that I thought I had now great reaſon to make uſe of the Apoſtles Caution, and to avoid them all; Even the very beſt of them; for even theſe for certain

tain were guilty of living contrary to the known Laws of the Land, and of uſing and enjoying many things as their own, which yet by thoſe Laws were not theirs, and ſo of living and allowing themſelves in a known ſin. So that, though otherwiſe they were and are very able and highly giſted men; yet who may deny, but that, as dead Flies do corrupt the moſt precious Oyntment: So theſe, as to ſome they may ſeem but little follies, did blemiſh them amongſt us, who were, and yet are ſome of them, in reputation for wiſdom? *Eccleſ.* 10. 1. *Thou only O God, art holy! Thou only art juſt!* But no one is there, not only of thy ſeemingly beſt,

beſt, but even of thy very beſt Servants in holy Scripture, who has been without ſomewhat noted, wherein he was culpable; even for this cauſe doubtleſs, leſt we ſhould eſteem of any man, above that which behoveth.

Sect. 10. From thoſe Scriptures, which noted the firſt Believers gathered together in one place; *our Saviour and his Apoſtles* reſorting to the Temple, as alſo the directions not to look for *Chriſt* in the deſart or ſecret chambers, nor to believe or follow thoſe, who pretended there to ſhew him; Obſerving alſo the Character given of thoſe, *who ſeparate themſelves, and would ſeduce others; That they ſhould be Mock-*

Mockers, such as derided all besides themselves, *that they should come in the last times* (that is, these since *Christ*, which we now live in, as well as those since *Christ*, that were before us) *and should walk after their own ungodly lusts, being sensual, having not the Spirit*, that is, though they pretended much to the Spirit, were indeed discovered to be sensual; *Here I seemed to my self, as by a voice from Heaven, to be warned against Conventicles and separate Meeting*; Especially, when I proceeded to read over the directions, which followed in my Paper, *To hold fast the profession of Faith without wavering, not forsaking the assembling of our selves,*

ſelves, *as the manner of ſome is*; and alſo *the Parable of the Shepherd and his Sheep*, which I found of conſtant uſe with *our Saviour*. For hereupon I could not but think, that they were *Wolves* ſure in *Sheeps Cloathing*, and *not Shepherds*, who, inſtead of guiding, would deſtroy the ſheep; and whoſe buſineſs it was, to drive them as far as they could out of the Fold, nay to pull down the Pen it ſelf. But, when I came to the deſcription, which S. *Paul* gives of the laſt days, and the perillous times, which ſhould then fall out; when *men ſhould be lovers of themſelves, covetous, boaſters, proud, and the like*, yet, notwithſtanding all this, *have a form of godli-*

neſs,

neſs, creep into houſes, and lead Captive ſilly women, laden with ſins, led away with divers luſts. There ſeemed to me nothing more left to the deſcription of theſe Teachers of our times, unleſs he ſhould have called them by their ſeveral names; And therefore inſtead of wondring at the numbers, which fell off to them, I ſatisfied my ſelf in the Account which S. *John* gives; *That they went out from us, becauſe they were not of us*; and their very going out did make it manifeſt, that they were not all of us.

Sect. 11. Laſtly, from thoſe *Scriptures*, which command *to obey thoſe that are over us, and have ſpoken to us the word of God; and to ſubmit our ſelves*

to

to them, ſince their authority is not from man but *God*; and that *no man taketh this honour to himſelf, but he who is called of God, as was Aaron*; and that it was equally impoſſible to believe without a Preacher, and to preach without being ſent; and that *God gave Apoſtles* in the firſt or higheſt place; in the ſecond, *Prophets*; in the third, *Teachers*; And that all are not to be *Apoſtles*, nor *Prophets*, nor *Teachers*. In theſe things, I plainly ſaw the Eſtabliſhment of a Miniſtry, and an Obligation to obey them. I ſaw alſo the Neceſſity of a lawfull Calling, and that none might preſume to go, till he were ſent; and farther, I ſaw that there was Order in the Miniſtry;

Miniſtry; ſome were to be before and above others; ſome were to ſend, and others to be ſent.

Sect. 12. And of all this I was the more perfectly convinced, when I conſidered the miſerable ſtate the Nation was brought into, by diſobedience and neglect in the former particulars. For, as our not valuing our Lords command of keeping Peace, and Love, and Unity to each other, certainly brought on a dreadful War (wherein, as all other conditions of men were involved, the poor Huſbandman was the greateſt ſufferer; He being expoſed as a prey to every Raſcal got on Horſe back, and in one night to ſee devoured

voured all that was provided for the ſuſtenance of his Family and Cattel, for a whole year: beſides, the intolerable inſolence, to which he was ſubjected, not to be ſuffered to be Maſter, nor ſcarce to be in his own Houſe): So our not regarding the remaining duties, of marking and avoiding theſe, that cauſed our diviſions, nor of keeping to the publick aſſemblies, nor of obeying them, who are over us; was the manifeſt ground of thoſe diſtractions in the Church, which heretofore rent it in pieces, and we at this day do groan under. For, whoever remembers any thing of the former times, cannot be ignorant, *that men firſt diſlik't ſome*

part

part of the publick Worſhip, then ſeparated themſelves from it; and then, to juſtifie their ſeparation, diſlik't more; and at the laſt, *left nothing in a manner of Chriſtianity to themſelves*, beſides the name and profeſſion of it. For inſtance, I remember about the beginning of the *Long Parliament*, a great cry was made againſt *Superſtition in the Church and Service of it*: and firſt, the *Litany* was ſpoken againſt; after that, the *Catechiſm*; then, the *Communion Service*; then, *ſet Forms of Prayers in general*; then, the *Creed*; and laſtly, *The Lords Prayer it ſelf.* In the mean time thoſe men, who upon theſe pretences *deſerted the Church*; firſt declared

themſelves to be *Presbyterians*; then went forward to be *Independents*; after that grew *Anabaptiſts*; then *Quakers*, or *Ranters*, or *Atheiſts*, or laſtly (for thither all theſe ſeveral motions tend) *profeſt Papiſts*. By this means the *Plain Country-man had no guidance to Salvation, no Catechiſm to inſtruct him in his duty to God and his Neighbour, no Prayers, no Sacraments to comfort and ſupport his Soul, but was bid to pray* ex tempore; (which he obſerved, *the Preacher himſelf could not do*, without *talking blaſphemouſly*, or at beſt *impertinently:*) and to lay hold on *Chriſt, To make ſure of Chriſt, Have an In-being with Chriſt, To be Godded in God, and Chriſted*

Chriſted in Chriſt; and a deal of ſuch *Canting Language*, which profited nothing towards the great duties of *the Goſpel, Faith, Repentance, and Newneſs of life.*

Sect. 13. Moreover, I ſaw in ſome houſes, and had certain information of many more, That, when plain illiterate people, Rulers of their reſpective Families, whether Men or Widows, attempted this way of *ex tempore Prayer*; They finding they could not do it to the ſatisfaction either of their hearers or themſelves, being many times at a perfect ſtand, not able to ſay any thing; Sometimes forced to vain Repetitions, and many times ſpeaking non-ſenſe and blaſ-

phemy; By these and other like mis-adventures, discerning they could not keep up their Family-Devotion by the Gift, have kept it up no way at all, but have let it wholly sink; And since, as those *that live without God in the World*, have had no office of Piety at all in their Families; Nay have wholly quitted the Duty of Prayer, as to themselves in their own persons.

Sect. 14. Upon the whole matter, having for many years together weighed and considered the before-mentioned particulars, it seems to me as manifest as the Sun at Noon-day, *That, as the prime Original cause of all our miseries and distractions, was and is the malice*

lice and uncharitableneſs of our hearts; *ſo their immediate cauſe was and is, our neglect of the publick Service*; and, to ſpeak in a word, *Our diſregard of the Common Prayer of the Church.* For with the diſlike of that, all our Calamities began, and we muſt ſure never hope to have an end of them, till we lay aſide that diſlike, and till, as was and is the great deſign of it, *We in* England *do make it, next the Bible, our Soveraign Guide for Worſhip, Private as well as Publick.* A Guide ſo ſure, ſo ready at hand, and ſo faithful, and ſo eaſie in all things to be underſtood, that by it, people as they may, ſo alſo they ought, as occaſion may be to admoniſh and

guide their erring Guides. For it is, I plainly find, but a wretched miſtake in ſome, and a baſe ſlander in others; That in *the Church of* England, many Pariſhes are left to a very ſimple Guide; One many times, who is ſo far from being able to guide others, that he cannot, or at leaſt does not, tolerably guide himſelf. No, no, our good Mother *the Church of England* is not ſo regardleſs of her Children. For ſo far is ſhe from leaving them to any ſuch unworthy Guide, that ſhe leaves them not to the guideance of any ſingle perſon, though never ſo able and worthy, much leſs to any one, who is neither Able nor Worthy. But how then? why truly to the

the tried and throughly-weighed guidance of her ſelf only in the *Liturgie, confirmed by the beſt, and fulleſt, and higheſt Power of this Land.* And let me tell you, *Children and Neighbours*, and I pray mark it well; By reaſon of this Excellency of it, I verily perſwade my ſelf, and not for any the leaſt real Evil or Untruth, that in it can be noted, It is, *that it hath incurr'd the mortal hatred and diſpleaſure of all Sectaries whatſoever*; As well knowing all of them, *That if this Guide have its due Reverence, Their weakneſſes and wickedneſſes can never, no not with the weakeſt, paſs for Truth and Piety*, as now they do but with too many, and thoſe too

of the ſoberer ſort. For, when once, even the ableſt have laid aſide their obſervance due unto it, They are open, I daily ſee, to the moſt fooliſh and hainous impreſſions that are. And further, Then, as one propheſied fourſcore years ago, Things of principal Excellency ſhall, upon all occaſions, be bitten at by men, whom God had endued with Graces both of Wit and Learning for better Purpoſes.

Sect. 15. I am not ſo fooliſh to hope, that theſe or any other words of mine will be much heeded by thoſe, whoſe Eternal intereſt ſure does in very deed oblige them both to heed them, and alſo to be perſwaded by

by them. However, having undertaken to given an Account of the Experiments, which I have made in matters of Religion, I plainly ſet down my Opinion, with the grounds of it, and ſhall proceed to declare in like manner, *What is my Practice as to Worſhip, both Publick in the Church, and Private in my Family.*

Sect. 16. Firſt, I ſhall ſet down the ſeveral Scriptures, which I drew together concerning *Prayer*; and upon which I guide my ſelf in the Duties of it, both Publick and Private. 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 17. *Pray without ceaſing.* Epheſ. 6. 18. *Praying always with all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all*

perſeverance and ſupplication for all Saints. Luke 18. 1. *&c. Jeſus ſpake a Parable to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint, ſaying, There was in a City a Judge, &c.* Luke the 11*th.* v. 1. &c. *The Diſciples ſaid unto Jeſus, Lord, teach us to pray, as* John *alſo taught his Diſciples. And he ſaid unto them, when ye pray, Say, our Father,* Mat. 21. 13. *My Houſe ſhall be called the Houſe of Prayer.* Mat. 18. v. 19, 20. *If two of you ſhall agree on Earth, as touching any thing, that they ſhall ask, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.* Mat. 26. v.

39.

39. *Jesus fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt, &c. He prayed the third time, saying the same words.* 1 Cor. 11. 4. *Every man praying or prophesying with his head covered, dishonoureth his head.* Matth. 6. v. 6, 7 *When thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, &c. Use not vain repetitions.* 1 Cor. 14. 15. *I will pray with the Spirit, and will pray with the understanding also.* Jam. 1. v. 6. *Ask in Faith, nothing wavering.* 1 Cor. 14. v. 40. *Let every thing be done decently and in order.*

Sect. 17. From the Scriptures, which command *to pray continually, to watch thereunto;*

Pray

Pray always, and faint not: As alſo from *the Parable of the unjuſt Judge, and importunate Widow*; I eaſily convinc't my ſelf of the great and weighty Concernment of the Duty. But beſides, it being manifeſt, that there are other Chriſtian Offices to be performed, as alſo natural Ones, ſuch as are to Eat, and Drink, and Sleep, *&c.* 'Tis manifeſt, the literal meaning of the words is not intended. So I reſolved it reaſonable, the Text muſt not be evacuated, to mean nothing. And if ſo, that the leaſt, which could fairly be imagined, was daily and conſtant, though intermitted, returns of Prayer; which, whether they were to be with the frequency, which

David

David mentions, when he ſays, *Seven times a day will I praiſe thee*; or that other of the ſame Prophet, *At morning, and at evening, and at noonday will I pray unto thee*; muſt be determined, not only by the Devotion, but by the leiſure and opportunities of every particular perſon; excepting where the Laws of thoſe, who are over us in the Lord, have determined it to our hands.

Sect. 18. From the Injunction to pray in the Spirit, compared with our Saviours teaching his Diſciples to pray, as *John* taught his Diſciples, that is, by a Form; as alſo *our Saviours* own Practice, who prayed, ſaying the ſame words; I learnt,

learnt, That to pray by a Form was very well consistent with praying by the Spirit; for doubtless our *Saviour* prayed by the Spirit; And also that the same words may be repeated (which is a consequent of Forms) without using vain repetitions. So that all those things, which are talkt concerning stinting the Spirit, are empty Bugbears to terrifie weak people; As indeed the fathering *Extempore Effusions upon the Holy Spirit, are impudent falsities, and a lying against the Holy Ghost.* Nay farther, having seriously considered of this matter, it appeared to me, That, whatever persons would say for praying by the Gift, It is only praying by

by the Gift to him that conceives them; for to all the Company they are Form. For who ſees not, that as much tied and ſtinted all the hearers are by the words ſpoken *ex tempore*, as if they had been the words of a Book? And therefore ſeeing that in the uſe ſuch prayers ceaſe to be *Gift*, and come to be *Form*, it had as good, nay much better, be a *known Form*, *which the Aſſembly underſtood and could go along with*; then a new and unknown one, which no body can, or perhaps ought to ſay *Amen* to. I ſhall not add, That, what is uſually called *Gift*, is generally nothing more than *Confidence, Uſe, and a Fluency of ſpeaking*. But had it been,

or

or were it a miraculous power, ſuch as the *Gift of Tongues or Miracles*, I know no reaſon, that people ſhould value themſelves or others on that Account; thoſe diſpenſations not at all implying Sanctifying Grace. And *our Saviour* has ſaid, *He will not know many of them, who have done miracles in his Name, and in his Name caſt out Devils.* Farther I obſerved, that ſince *our Saviour* has promiſed to the *Aſſembly of Chriſtians*, who ſhall agree together as touching any thing, which they ſhall aſk, *It ſhall be done for them*; Certainly a moſt effectual way to ſecure an intereſt in this promiſe, is to agree not only of the things to be deſired, but of the

the forms and words alſo, in which it ſhould be deſired, unleſs we are ſo ſtupid to think, that the Spirit is not ſtinted by agreeing upon the matter, but is ſtinted by agreeing upon the words. Add hereunto, Seeing now, (bleſſed be God!) Experience has undeceived a great many, and ſufficiently ſatisfied they are of what is greateſt truth, That variety and effuſions before others, (whether in Church, or Family, or elſewhere) though to ſick and dying men, even then having fleſh and blood about them, as well as to others, they may be more graceful, yet to our *God* not more pleaſing, nor for our ſelves more effective are they, then

then *Forms*; having all things neceſſary in them, and ſuppoſing the like firmneſs, fixedneſs, and fervency of devotion under theſe, as under thoſe; This being ſo and ſo, why do we not watch and oblige our hearts to greateſt devoutneſs and conſtancy in the beſt Form of Worſhip, that is? and why do we not deny our ſelves the purſuit of that, which we erroneouſly call *Better*, and more Graceful, and more to our Miniſters ſhewing their Reverence and Reſpect to us; when, for want of croſſing our ſelves in this one point, we every where ſee not only Peace and Charity, but Faith alſo, to be moſt ſtrangely decayed and undermined? For, how ſhall we

we deny our ſelves in all other things, if we will not in this one, always moſt proper, but now moſt neceſſary, Object of that great *Goſpel Grace*, Self-denial? But then further from the promiſes which are annexed to the aforeſaid Scriptures, I deſire to add aſſurance, and firm confidence to my Prayers; knowing *that Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs away before one tittle of the Word of God ſhall fail and be unaccompliſht*; and therefore unleſs we aſk amiſs; *if we ask we ſhall receive, if we ſeek we ſhall find, if we knock it ſhall be opened unto us*; not that the thing prayed for it ſelf is always granted: but that we have ſomewhat of greater

greater value in its place and ſtead ; thus though the *Cup did not paſs from* our Saviour, as he prayed, *Matth.* 26. Yet was he *then heard*, *in what he feared*, Heb. 5. 7. And though the *Thorn* was not taken out of *Pauls fleſh*, nor the *Meſſenger of Satan* removed *who buffeted him*, according to his thrice-repeated prayer : yet was he therein anſwered, having *Grace* given to him, and the *ſtrength of God* which is *magnified in weakneſs*, 2 Cor. 12.

Sect. 19. From *our Saviours* falling on his face, and kneeling in prayer, and *the Apoſtles* direction to men, to have their heads uncovered, and to do all things decently and in order ; I learn, what were the humble poſtures

poſtures and demeanours due to Prayer. And that therefore they ſure were furiouſly mad, or intolerably prophane, who took away *Ceremonies*, and thereby decency, from Religious Worſhip, and made ſlovenly rudeneſs a Conſequent of Godlineſs. Nay farther, having ponder'd long, and ſeriouſly conſidered of the matter; It appeared to me that thoſe, who oppoſed *Ceremonies* upon pretence of Superſtition, were themſelves the while, very guilty in that particular; it being the ſame reſtraint and breach upon Chriſtian Liberty, to oblige ones ſelf or others not to do an indifferent thing, as to be obliged by another to do it; but only for this,

this, that in the one Caſe a man is only *Superſtitious*; in the other, he is *Diſobedient, and Schiſmatical, and Superſtitious to boot.* Nay further yet, while the Diſſenter pretends a fear of giving ſcandal to weak Brethren; that is, ſuch, who diſobey the Laws of thoſe, that are over them in *the Lord*, as alſo the *Civil Magiſtrate*; He gives a real ſcandal to thoſe that are ſtrong, who do their duties, and walk orderly. And if his example prevail upon them, muſt anſwer both for their diſobedience, and his own.

Sect. 20. Having upon the grounds aforeſaid come to a ſetlement of my Opinion in the

the *Duties of Religion*, I found my ſelf concerned accordingly to guide *my Practice*. Which, in what manner I have done, and continue to do, and by *Gods* help, ſhall endeavour to do to my lives end, I come now to declare. And this, with the ſame freedom and plaineſs, that I have uſed in my former diſcourſes.

Sect. 21. And firſt I make it my buſineſs *upon the Lords Day* and *Holy-days*, and *their Eves*, as alſo on *Wedneſdays* and *Fridays*, when the *Litany* is read, if poſſibly I can, to come to Church at the beginning of Divine Service, or rather, if I can, a little before the beginning, that ſo I may prepare my ſelf for the great Duty

Duty of Prayer; Calling to mind ſuch ſentences of Scripture, as ſeem moſt proper to ſtir up Devotion; ſuch as thoſe of the Pſalmiſt; *I was glad, when they ſaid unto me, We will go into the Houſe of the Lord. I had rather be a Door-keeper in the Houſe of my God, than to dwell in the Tents of Ungodlineſs. O how amiable are thy dwellings, O Lord of Hoſts!* and the like; as alſo thoſe other, which I have before ſet down concerning Prayer. When the Service begins, having put my ſelf into the poſture of Prayer, I attend carefully to the Miniſter, repeating diſtinctly the Reſponſes, and with earneſt fervour and aloud ſaying, *Amen*, at the cloſe

cloſe of each Collect. Alſo in the Pſalms and Hymns, not only lifting up my heart in thankful acknowledgments to God for his mercies, and concluding with affectionate attribution of *Glory to Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, but alſo, according as I am commanded, *Pſal.* 95. 2. making in this part of Worſhip a joyful noiſe to him; *There*, where alteration is in uſe, by repeating every other Verſe: where not ſo, if I have a Book before me, by reading all along with the Miniſter, ſo loud at leaſt, as to be heard by thoſe next me. If no Book, then out of his mouth and my own memory, framing, by good attention, all or moſt of

the words and ſentences, as he moſt leiſurely utters them to the underſtanding of all the Congregation. A way, which they alſo, who are wholly unletter'd, may, if they will, take for worthy joyning with the Congregation in this part of the Worſhip; and which ſome ſuch are known to have done ſo ſucceſsfully, that, after long and much heeding, whenſoever they have heard any Verſe quoted out of the *Pſalter*, they have been able to ſay, to what day of the Month, though not to what *Pſalm* it did and does belong. When the Leſſons are read, I hearken with Reverence and Attention, conſidering that *the Almighty God of Heaven and*

and Earth ſpeaks to me, and that not the deſcants of men talking out of the Pulpit, but this indeed is the Word of *God*, and the Preaching of it; which, if it work not upon us, whatever we may think to the contrary, moſt true it is (for our Saviour has ſaid it) *We would not be perſwaded, though one ſhould riſe from the dead.* Such value therefore I have for this no leſs ancient than true Preaching, (Act. 15. 21. *Moſes preached, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath day*) that I think the Service very compleat, though there happen to be no Sermon. But if there be one, I very gladly attend unto it, not minding ſo much the ſkill or eloquence of

the Preacher, as the Duties he recommends; never taking upon me to judge or diſcommend the meaneſt performance, not only becauſe all ſuch doing has much of ſin in it, but alſo becauſe ſome good may be gathered from the ſlighteſt diſcourſe, that can be made. Beſides, I do often charge my ſelf to take heed of that Mother-miſtake, wherewith ſo many both heretofore have been, and ſtill are carried away and abuſed; *That the great end of going to Church, is to hear and learn*; Or, *That that is the righteſt Way and trueſt Church, where there is moſt and moſt powerful Preaching.* For whoever they be, thus opinionated of,

of, and thus affected to, the under end of Religious Aſſemblies, conſtant to the publick Meetings, I duly ſee, they will not long be; Be the Miniſter of the place never ſo ſound and powerful in his Preaching and Catechizings, and in his life never ſo innocent, blameleſs, and inoffenſive. But when the great Ends, are by people believeingly and religiouſly thought on; ſuch as, *Prayer and Praiſe*, and the chief Sacrifice of Praiſe, the *Communion*, and keeping up *Chriſtian Unity and Communion*, *and hearing the Word* diſtinctly read, as a part of Worſhip (there being no truer Worſhip and Honour to God in this World,

then from the heart to acknowledge and believe that *the Bible is the Will and Word of the Living God*) and the like: Then be the Preaching and Catechizing never ſo mean, yet, for theſe perpetual and never failing ends, meet Believers will; and in their meetings give that glory to God, and benefit to their own Souls, which in them God hath ſo mercifully deſigned to himſelf and them.

Sect. 22. After the Service is finiſh't, I reverently depart out of the Church, and being returned home, imploy what vacant time I have in reading my ſelf, and in hearing my Servants and Children repeat their Catechiſm; and read

read the Scriptures and other good Books, eſpecially thoſe Scriptures, which they heard read in the Church, the Leſſons, and Epiſtle and Goſpel for the day; Becauſe more conform ſure are they to the mind of God and his Church in this part of the publick Worſhip (the Leſſons, Epiſtle and Goſpel) who in the Church do not read them along with the Miniſter, but only hear them read, as a part of Worſhip; And at home only read them their ſelves; Always looking out, and pitching upon, and being affected with ſome one or other ſpecial ſentence, for their ſpecial pondering all the week after. For I do not think the

buſineſs of the Day diſpatch't at Church, or in two or three hours; Becauſe, though *the Judaical keeping of the Sabbath be now out dated*, Yet the Reaſon of the Service (the dedicating a part of our time to God, who gives us that and all things elſe) is now of as much force as ever; nay now has ſtronger obligations, foraſmuch as the remembrance of the New Creation is ſuperadded to the Old; and the deliverance from the ſervitude of the ſpiritual *Pharaoh*, is to be acknowledged by us *Chriſtians*, beyond the Reſcue from the *Ægyptian Bondage*, which the *Jews* were concerned in.

Sect. 23. But if *the Lords Day*

Day or other *Feſtival of the Church*, which requires a more ſolemn attendance, happen to have alſo *the holy Sacrament of the Euchariſt* adminiſtred upon it, I fail not to partake thereof; and accordingly, *By Meditation and Prayer and holy Reſolution, and ſuch ſhort Examination of my ſelf, as preſently I ſhall expreſs, endeavour to prepare my ſelf for the Reception of it*; conſidering what befel thoſe Gueſts, who, being invited to the Supper of their Lord, excuſed themſelves upon the Account of their ſecular imployments; Remembring alſo, what became of him, who did come, but *without a Wedding Garment*; and how unreaſonable a

thing it is to take care for our daily bread, which nouriſhes the body, but have no regard of that bread, by which our Souls are nouriſhed to Eternal life; Eſpecially, ſince it was the dying Precept of our Saviour, That, *as often* (which certainly would be at leaſt thrice in the year) *as we did it, we ſhould do it in remembrance of him.*

Sect. 24. In reference to private Devotion, beſides, that every night before Bedtime I pray with my Family, part of the Evening Service, according to the *Liturgie*, (Our mean condition allowing vacancy for that, though it do not for any other ſolemn Returns of Prayer;) I *ſingly* addreſs

addreſs my ſelf to ſeek the Face of God, after this manner. So ſoon as I awake, I lift up my heart in ſhort Ejaculations to the Divine Goodneſs, who has brought me to the beginning of the day, deſiring his bleſſing in all the occurrents of it; And having ſlipt on my Cloaths, before I go out of my Lodging-Cote, I kneel me down, and in the hearing of all that are awake (on purpoſe that they alſo, when up, may not be abaſhed to do ſo too; and indeed uſe will make them conſtant, and think, it is expected from them by man as well as God) in the hearing, I ſay, of all that are awake, I pray over *the Lords Prayer, the Collects for the Morning,*

Morning, *for the Kings Majeſty*, *for the Royal Family*, *for the Clergie and People*, *and for all conditions of men*, with the ſhort Collect that follows it, and the General Thankſgiving; Remembring it to be a particular duty of Chriſtians to pray *for Kings and all in Authority*; *and unto Prayer to add Thanksgiving.* As alſo the general Prayer for all conditions of men; in which I more eſpecially remember my Friends and Family, Kindred and Benefactors, my Landlord, and the Miniſter of my Pariſh, who is my Spiritual Father; as alſo my Enemies, thoſe greateſt Benefactors, who are ſure to tell me of my faults; and give me cauſe to walk

walk more warily both towards God and men than otherwiſe I ſhould.

Sect. 25. Having thus, acceptedly, I verily believe, from a man of my condition, bleſſed and armed my ſelf for the buſineſs of that Morning; I ſet forward, with what ſpeed I can, to my imployment, and continue at my labours till Break-faſt time; which taken not without ſome ſhort Grace, to my ſelf at leaſt, both before and after, ere it be Noon, I make to my ſelf leiſure for a ſecond and more large return to Prayer, which I uſe according to the Liturgy, adding now the Pſalms for the Day, which I omitted in the Morning. And I the rather

rather *keep to a ſet Form*, not only upon the grounds above produced, but alſo, becauſe I have found by manifold experience, That, when I have left my ſelf to ſuch Prayers and deſires, as I have been able to put forth upon the ſudden, I have ſtill been apt to be very broken, imperfect, looſe, and diſorderly in them; and by running out into impertinencies, to ſpend more time in my Offices, than I could well ſpare; (though upon a juſt account ſhorter, than they ſhould be.) And yet to *a ſet Form I am not ſo reſolvedly addicted, as not upon emergent occaſions, and when I find my Soul enlarged, to pour it out, as God by his grace enables me.*

me. But I ſay, ordinarily and of courſe I uſe none but Forms. And the Form I uſe is *the Liturgie of the Church*, not only becauſe it is the beſt, for its matter and compoſition, that I can find; but thereby to owne my ſelf a Member of that Holy Community, and alſo to gain the advantage of joyning in the ſame Prayers, and at the very ſame time, with many thouſands, who throughout the whole Nation preſent their Supplications before the Throne of Grace, in the ſame words with me, as but now was ſaid, and at the ſame time. For though in going over this Office, I am all alone, yet by reaſon of that Article, *The Communion*

munion of. *Saints*, I do ſure properly enough ſay *our* and *our*, and *we* and *we*, and *us* and *us*, in all the other Prayers, as well as in that Prayer of Prayers, *The Lords Prayer.*

Sect. 26. Inſtead therefore of a Cloſet, at the time aforeſaid, I repair into ſome private place in or about my Houſe; Or, if I happen to be at work in the Field, ſome unfrequented Hedg, or Brake, or Copſe; And there, either kneeling, or ſtanding, or lying down, as I may (for I find all theſe poſtures approved in Scripture for Prayers and Praiſes) I begin my devotion with one or more of the ſentences of Scripture at the beginning

ginning of the *Liturgie*: And proceeding to the Confeſſion, which I repeat with the greateſt humility and moſt affectionate concernment, that I can; I wholly ſkip over the Abſolution, as not to be pronounced by me to my ſelf or any other, but to me and others only by the Prieſt. But for the Lords Prayer, the Verſicles annext, with their Anſwers, and *Gloria Patri*; theſe I look upon as the moſt weighty parts of my taſk; and do therefore with the greateſt heats, that I can raiſe my heart unto, preſent them to my God, in the behalf of all others, as well as of my ſelf and Family. Whereunto when I add the *Venite* and

Pſalms

Pſalms for the whole day, I do not only read them with attention, ſo as to underſtand and conſider them as I go; but my great care is to pray them over, and with earneſtneſs of heart to offer them up to Heaven in Acts of Worſhip; or, in one word, to worſhip by them. This done, I proceed to acting my Faith upon the Creed, and to praying over the remaining Prayers according to the Order of the Church, ſave only that I omit the Prayer next before, *The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, as being to be ſaid by none but by a Congregation of two or three at the leaſt; and where there are Verſicles and Anſwers, I, having none to

to anſwer, make one very ſhort, but very pithy and effective Prayer of them. All which, unleſs I fooliſhly give my ſelf leave to trifle and play with aliene and vain thoughts, is fully diſpatcht in one quarter of an hour, which, as it is a conſiderable time to a poor Huſbandman, ſo may it well be made up by induſtrious labour in the reſt of the day.

Sect. 27. And what I thus practiſe my ſelf, I alſo recommend to my Children and Servants, remembring, That among the Reaſons given by God for his Bleſſing of *Abraham*, and making him a great Nation, This is particularly aſſigned, That he would teach his

his Houſhold to fear the Lord. To them therefore I allow always one quarter of an hour after Break-faſt, charging them at that time to get themſelves into ſome privacy or other, and there ſeek the Face of God, as they can, if they cannot, as is beſt. And if thus favoured and guided, they do nothing in very deed of what they are directed to do, themſelves are in all the fault; I and my buſineſs are free from it.

Sect. 28. And, whereas Country people not uſed to the power of Godlineſs, are apt to be aſhamed to be obſerved to retire unto, or much more to be deprehended in their Devotions; I have not failed

failed often to mind them, that it is better by far, to endure the Lip and Leering of Fools for a day or two (which, when they have once or twice deſpiſed, they ſhall be troubled with no more) than the never ending ſhame and confuſion, which will be the portion of the Ungodly in Hell. And as to thoſe, who could not read, I have by all means encouraged them to get by heart, either all or as many of the Prayers of the Church, which are of conſtant uſe, as their memories would retain; aſſuring them, that their Souls are as precious to God, and were redeemed by as great a price, as the Souls of the learneſt Doctors, or greateſt Princes; and

and ought to be as dear to themſelves ; *The whole World not being a valuable price for one ſingle Soul.*

Sect. 29. And here I cannot but with greateſt thankfulneſs of heart recount my paſt and preſent Condition. For, about forty years ago, when I was able to make one at all buſineſs, I was adviſed to keep a Teem, though my own poor Eſtate were not the fourth part of a Driſt ; Yet this courſe being moſt adviſable, I undertook it, and was thereby neceſſitated to keep Servants, with whom I dealt, as others did ; that is, ſuffered them to do even what themſelves liſted, as to what concerned their Souls. And then

ſeldom

ſeldom or never could I get any thing done, except my eye were over them. And if I or my Wife chanced to be abroad, at our return we were likely to be welcom'd home with the news of ſome ill accident or other from their negligence or diſorder. But after that it pleaſed God to direct me into the way I am now in, of practiſing my ſelf, and engaging my Houſhold to the Service of God, I find my own much better performed. For, if I or my Wife, or both of us go to a Fair or Market, and leave work to do, we are ſure to find it well done, the Cattel and little Ones, when we had them, and Houſe in as good order, as if neither of

us

us had been from home. And, if ſome of them happen to loyter a little, I can then diſcern them to be aſhamed and ſorry for their neglect, and more angry at themſelves, than I can be with them for it. So that in many temporal reſpects, I have found it moſt true, that Godlineſs is great gain, and the only way to have good Servants, is firſt to make them good Chriſtians.

Sect. 30. I have hitherto rendered an account of my daily practice in the Duty of Prayer, both as to my ſelf and Family. Beſides this, whilſt I am at my work, I ceaſe not by ſhort Ejaculations to liſt up my heart unto God, deſiring

ring him to have mercy on me, to increaſe my Faith, to teach me to number my days, and the like. And the more to engage my mind to good thoughts and a Converſation in Heaven; whatſoever buſineſs I am about, I recollect thoſe Reflections, which the Spirit of God in the Holy Scripture hath made upon that particular work and buſineſs. If I am Plowing, I call to mind the gentle Curſe laid upon *Adam of eating bread in the ſweat of his brows.* The Parable of the Sower, and the Kingdom of Heaven compared to a Field; The command of the Prophet, *to break up the fallow*

ground of the heart, and not to ſow among Thorns, and the like. When I am with my Cattel, I remember that ſaying of the Prophet, *The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Aſs his Maſters Crib*; that of *David*, *Be not like to Horſe and Mule, which have no underſtanding*; That of our Saviour, *I am the good Shepherd*, and the like. And indeed, it ſo falls out, that there is no one part of the Huſbandmans Imployment, which is not ſome way or other owned in the Holy Scripture; As if it had been the purpoſe of Almighty God, to encourage that deſpiſed and laborious Calling, by expreſſing the great

great Myſteries of Godlineſs, in Parables and Similitudes taken thence: Our Saviour himſelf not diſdaining to be called a *Shepherd*, and God the Father, a *Husbandman*.

Sect. 31. All this, eſpecially upon Sundays and Communion-days, that I and all my Family, may the more acceptedly and ſucceſsfully perform, I lay the greateſt charge I can upon my ſelf and them, for theſe two things; Firſt, That in none of our Worſhip, Publick or Private, we be wanting to our ſelves for raiſing our inward Worſhip, by obliging our ſelves to greateſt care and continual practice of the out-

ward, in proſtration of Body, in bended knees, in hands and eyes lifted up to Heaven, in ſighs and groans, in tying our ſelves, ſometimes at leaſt, to ſay the very words of all the Prayers and Praiſes, after the mouth of the Company, and other like outward, both advantages and indications of inward Devotion; As well knowing that a great number of Scriptures, beſides thoſe before, many by way of Example, and not a few alſo by way of Rule, do call to us for this prudence: Nothing being more neceſſary to be averted in religious Offices, than their degenerating, for want of

theſe Enlivenings, into heartleſs diſpirited Recitations, or meer Lip labours: Or, which is much worſe, into being at Church, but not being at Prayers. Beſides, plentiful experience hath given this in for a moſt certain truth, That, though ſometimes there may be outward Devotion, when there is no inward, yet never is there inward Devotion without ſome part or other of the outward. Secondly, That every Sunday morning, eſpecially if it be a Communion-day, we do not any of us lie the longer in Bed, becauſe it is Holy-day, but rather go to bed a little the ſooner on the over-night, on

purpoſe that being gotten up a little the earlier that Morning, and having diſpatcht all our works of neceſſity and common honeſty, we may every one of us get himſelf or her ſelf into ſome privacy before Prayer time; And there having by Faith ſet our ſelves as in the preſence of God, every one to do as I do; that is, Firſt I offer up unto God the Lords Prayer, at the end of every Petition thinking of my ſelf chiefly, if not only; Then, the Prayer before the Commandments, changing only, *the thoughts of our hearts*, into *the thoughts of my heart*; and, *that we may perfectly love thee*, into, *that I may*

may perfectly love thee: And this done, I do moſt humbly rehearſe every Commandment; and after the rehearſal, ſay, *Lord have mercy upon me*, in reſpect of my violations of this firſt, ſecond, third, *&c.* Commandment, whatſoever they are or have been; And for the time to come, incline my heart to keep this firſt, ſecond, third, *&c.* Commandment, in the full extent and true meaning thereof: Bethinking my ſelf, and calling to mind, and in words uttering, as I can, my lateſt breaches of every Commandment; And after all, *Lord have mercy upon me, and write all theſe thy Laws in my heart,*

Lord I beſeech thee. Then, one of the Prayers for the King; And after, I do the beſt I can, to act my Faith upon the Nicene Creed, by a moſt ſteddy and believing rehearſal of it, thus; *I believe in one God----- And in one Lord Jeſus----- And I believe in the Holy----- And I believe one Catholick and* ---- Concluding with this Scripture Ejaculation; *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief; And give unto me I beſeech thee, O Lord, That I may in very deed believe in God the Father, as the Maker of me and all the World; In God the Son, as the Redeemer of me and all Mankind; and in God the Holy Ghoſt, as the Sanctifier*

Sanctifier of me and of all the Elect people of God; And that I may know Christ Jesus, and the Power of his Resurrection, and the fellowship of his Suffering, being made conformable unto his Death, that I may attain unto the Resurrection of the dead, Amen. And these things done (in about half a quarter of an hour) I make no doubt at all but this is real examining and acting my Faith and Repentance; Sure I am, as much as the busie life of Country people, ordinarily and for constancy can attain unto. After this, we all betake our selves together to the Church, so as to be sure to be there some little time

before the beginning, as before I have noted; not any being ſuffered to ſtay behind, unleſs one perhaps, to look to the houſe and keep the pot boiling; as heretofore to look to the little ones; And this (to note this alſo by the way) upon this conſideration; Becauſe, whilſt very Infants, I have ever thought it beſt, they ſhould be kept at home; And that, becauſe, the Children and little ones, that are invited to praiſe the Lord, are not meer Infants, I conceive, but ſuch Children, as thoſe in St. *Matthew*, who the Text plainly ſaith, cryed in the Temple, ſaying, *Hoſanna to the Son of David*, Mat. 21. v. 15.

Sect.

Sect. 32. There have been indeed formerly about us, ſeveral Lectures in the Market-Towns, as there alſo have been and are divers Conventicles and private Meetings, which I know many of my Neighbours have and do ſtill frequent, aud judge others for not doing in like manner; and much repine at their reſtraint: for my part I am not ſatisfied, but that the ſame Commandment which enjoyns to reſt on the Sabbath Day, does peremptorily give in charge, *ſix days ſhalt thou labour*: and I fear that at the great day, an account muſt be given for *the iniquities of theſe our holy things*; not only

ly for the pride, ſingularity, Schiſm and Rebellion, of ſuch Aſſembling; but even for miſſpending that time in *Hearing*, which ſhould have been ſpent in *doing*; and that *many* who cry *Lord, Lord*, and think they have great familiarity with God, ſhall be ſent back with *I know you not, depart from me you workers of iniquity*, Luk. 13.

Sect. 33. But beſides the ordinary Duties of Piety, we have in the Holy Scripture evident mention of divers extraordinary; ſuch as are Faſting and Humiliation, Praiſe and Thankſgiving, reſignation into Gods hand in caſe of ſickneſs; and laſtly, pre-

preparation for Death; in all which I cannot but think my ſelf exceedingly concerned. And as to the firſt, although to a poor man, his whole life is ſome kind of abſtinence, and a perpetual *Lent*; yet ſure our Saviour ſaying to his Diſciples, who were no leſs poor, Mat. 6. *When you faſt, &c.* Suppoſes that Duty to reach unto ſuch; beſides, if poor men have ſins to repent of, there is ſelf *revenge* and the Acts of Mortification to be performed according to the ſaying of the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 7. As Praiſe and Thankſgiving for mercies received, this is not only a duty of natural gratitude, but the higheſt

Act

Act of Worſhip, and the buſineſs of Eternity in Heaven: according to that ſaying of the Pſalmiſt, *Who offereth praiſe, he honoureth me.* But then if I am ſeized by ſickneſs, I look upon it as Gods immediate hand and Viſitation; making it my endeavour while my ſtrength and underſtanding remain with me, to ſet my Houſe in order, and do juſtice to my Family, in leaving to them what God has bleſt me with; for I obſerve, that for want of timely care herein, the Teſtaments of the dead are generally the Wills, nay the Knavery of the living. Having done this, I lay aſide all earthly Cares, and

and prepare for my laſt account; and think my ſelf more concerned to ſend for the Phyſician of my Soul, the Miniſter, than the other for my Body, though that I do not omit. It is the direction of St. *James*, that *if any one be ſick he ſhould ſend for the Elders or Miniſters of the Church*, *Jam.* 5. And though poſſibly he may not be either ſo pious or ſo learned as it were to be wiſht, yet ſince it is his Office to pray for the people, and to bleſs in Gods Name: I have all reaſon to aſſure my ſelf that his Miniſtration both of Prayers and Sacrament ſhall be beneficial to me: and I may be ſaved by

by the preaching of him, who himſelf is a caſt-away, 1 *Cor.* 9. 27.

Sect. 34. Having given this account of my Duty to God; I am next to ſpeak of that great remaining part, which concerns my Neighbour; Whether he be my Superiour, the Prince and Magiſtrate; Or Equal, my friend and fellow Subject. And concerning the former I was guided by theſe and the like Scriptures; *My Son, fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change: for their deſtruction ſhall riſe ſuddenly, and who knoweth the ruine of them both?* Prov. 24.

24. verſ. 21, 22. *Curſe not the King, no not in thy thought.* Eccleſ. 10. 20. *Fear God, honour the King. The King, as Supreme; and Governours, as thoſe that are ſent by him.* 1 Pet. 2. verſ. 17. 13, 14. *Ye muſt needs be ſubject, not only for wrath, but alſo for Conſcience ſake.* Rom. 13. verſ. 5. *They that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves damnation*, v. 2. And when I conſider how many miſguided Souls, have not only been engaged in open Rebellion againſt the Lords Anointed, ſpilt the blood of others and their own in that unhappy quarrel; but continue to this day juſtifying themſelves in every thing they

they did ; As I am aſtoniſht at ſo deſperate perverſeneſs ; I alſo find my ſelf obliged to liſt up my heart with all thankfulneſs to God, who has withheld me from being led into this temptation ; and throughout the late troubles, kept me back not only from lifting up my hand againſt the late King, but from owning or abetting that ſide and party, even when it flouriſht moſt, and ſeemed at once to be both great godlineſs and great gain.

Sect. 35. As to my demeanour towards my fellow Subjects, the Scriptures, which guide me, are ſuch as theſe ; *Seek peace and enſue it*, Pſal.

34.

34. 13. *If it is poſſible, as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men.* Rom. 12. 18. *Not rendring evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwiſe bleſſing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye ſhould inherit bleſſing,* 1 Pet. 3. 9. *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another,* Rom. 13. 8. *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it,* Prov. 3. 27. *Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do ye even ſo to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets,* Matth. 7. 12. *Set apart thy Tythes with gladneſs. Will a man rob*

rob God ? But ye have robbed me. But ye ſay wherein have we robbed thee ? In Tythes and Offerings, Mal. 3. verſ. 8. *Let no man defraud or overreach his Brother in any matter , becauſe that the Lord is the Avenger of all ſuch*, 1 Theſſ. 4. 6. *Ballances of deceit , an abomination to the Lord*, Prov. 11. 1. *Let every man wherein he is called , therein abide with God*, 1 Cor. 7. 24. *Mind not high things , but ſort with them of low degree*, Rom. 12. 26. *Thou ſhalt not go about a Tale-bearer* , Levit. 19. 16 *Nor buſie-body in other mens matters*, 1 Pet. 4. 15. *&c.*

Sect. 36. The Goſpel being

ing called the Goſpel of Peace, and our Saviour, as the Prince thereof, making his firſt Proclamation by the mouth of the heavenly Hoſt, That he was come to bring Peace to Earth, and good will towards men; his life and precepts ſtill inculcating that Duty; and his dying Legacy being ſtill the ſame largeſs of Peace; I fully convinc't my ſelf of the importance of that Duty, believing it a ſad exchange, which now adays men make with ſuch induſtry, who loſe the certain poſſeſſion of Unity and Peace, upon the expectation and pretence of truth. Charity may indeed cover

cover a multitude of ſins; But the knowing the Maſters will, without a faithful doing of it, will only occaſion the infliction of more, and more heavy ſtripes. And in the Apoſtles compariſon, knowledge puffeth up, but Charity edifies, that is, buildeth up: The increaſe of the one being to ſickneſs; of the other, to ſtrength and uſe. Almighty God is himſelf one; has given us one Mediator between himſelf and men, the Man Chriſt Jeſus. There is likewiſe but one Faith, one Baptiſm, one Common Hope; and all Chriſtians he has made one by the neareſt tye of Unity,

to

to be Members of the ſame Body, under Jeſus Chriſt the Head. And certainly we have little value for our Profeſſion, little ſenſe of our Saviours honour, or of our own duty and concern, if we make a rupture here, and break through all thoſe bonds of Unity, preferring a party beyond the whole, and the Being of *Paul*, *Apollos*, or *Cephas*, rather than of *Chriſt*.

Sect. 37. Next unto Charity I eſteem Juſtice, which is a Duty ſo ſacred, that my Alms is robbery without it; The beſt actions which are founded in injury, being but ſuch Sacrifices, as were offered

offered in *Tophet*, where murder was the Oblation.

Sect. 38. A moſt common, but yet certain kind of injuſtice, is the non-payment of Debts; A Theft, which has generally this aggravation, that breach of Faith and Promiſe is annext to it. I therefore rather want, than borrow any thing, which I am not certainly enabled to pay; And do rather undergo any inconvenience, than fail of being punctual to my Engagements, whether they be the ſtanding ones, of Rent unto my Landlord, and payment of Common Rates; or accidental ones,

ones, of payments at day upon chaffer or bargaining, or other Obligation by Bond or Specialty; And to this end am very ſparing in undertaking any thing in reference to the future, as not knowing what a day may bring forth.

Sect. 39. Among my Debts I reckon that moſt incumbent duty of doing all the good I can to all perſons, with whom I have to do; eſteeming it a great unkindneſs to my ſelf as well as to my Neighbour, to forfeit the benefit and advantage of doing a good turn; but a plain injuſtice towards God, who has made us Stewards and Diſpenſers

of his good things; and will puniſh the laying up our Talent in the Napkin, as if we had laviſht it away in riot and exceſs.

Sect. 40. The ſhort and ſtanding Rule both of Juſtice and Charity, I take to be the doing to others, whatſoever we would have done to our ſelves: Than which nothing can be more equal, and nothing more applicable upon all emergent Accidents; every the meaneſt Capacity knowing its own deſires and expectations, and thereby alſo its own Duty; for inſtance, if I in my extremity would not be deſtituted, let me ſee I never turn my face from

from any poor man: If I desire my self to be plainly and Christianly told of my mistakes and misadventures, let me be so true to the Fame and Reformation of my Neighbour, as not to tell others, but the offenders themselves only of their faults and failings: If I am not well pleased to be born down with loudness, impudence and confidence, let me never go about to baffle, amaze, and stun any body else. If I am grieved to be made story and Town-talk, let me do nothing towards making any man else so, &c.

Sect. 41. The payment of Tythes seems, I know, ge-

nerally a great burthen, but I eſteem it a great priviledge. It was the Villany of *Cain* to offer unto God the worſt of his increaſe; but he muſt be a ſtrange Wretch, who grudges the offering even of that. Upon reading of the Scripture I eaſily diſcern, that the Jews in their firſt and ſecond Tythings, their firſt Fruits, their Caſual expiations for legal impurities (not to reckon their ſin offerings and free Oblations and Vows, as alſo the Cities with their Territories belonging to the Prieſts and other Attendants upon the Altar) made a far more liberal diſpoſal of their goods for Gods Service,

Service, than is now expected from us Chriſtians. And yet the Apoſtle ſays, that under the Evangelical Diſpenſation, as well as the Jewiſh; They that wait at the Altar, were to live of the Altar. And, however we think the meaneſt, moſt ſordid pittance enough for them, he reſolves them worthy, not only of ſingle, but double honour. In ſhort, ſeeing God gives me all, and requires a tenth, it muſt be a great baſeneſs in me to refuſe him that. The meer munificence of Benefactors gave them to God and his Church; The Law of the Land has made them the Inheritance of the Church;

No man ever purchaſed the Propriety: No man pays Rent for that, with his other nine parts; ſo that I muſt be injurious to God and Man, and therewith to my own Soul, ſo far as Theft and Sacriledge can make me, if I withhold my Tythes.

Sect. 42. In making bargains I avoid all Art and Subtlety; neither diſcommend what I would buy, nor praiſe what I would ſell; much leſs tell lies, or, what is the worſt of robberies, uſing falſe weights or meaſures, moſt juſtly ſtyled an Abomination to God.

Sect. 43. My vocation being Huſbandry, I wholly apply

ply my self to it; knowing well, that, since I am no Statesman, it is not for me to trouble my head with State-affairs, or pick quarrels with my Superiours, whom Christianity commands me to obey and pray for. And since I am no Divine, I may not take upon me to determine of Questions in Religion, or to controul the Minister, who is over me in the Lord.

Sect. 44. Being Master of my own Family only, I may not meddle with the transactions in my Neighbours; but must make a great Account at the Day of Judgment for my self and those

depending on me; and therefore need not clog my ſelf with other unconcerning Reckonings. In my own Family indeed I am bold to ſee, that all live according to their Condition; not ſuffering my Sons to be dreſs't up with Ribbands and Baubles, fitter for my Fore Horſe, than them; nor my Daughters to be Hooded in Blackbags, or ſpruc'd up with Scarffs and Laces, as if they were not to ſell their Butter and Cheeſe, but themſelves at the Market. I know well that they, who are ſollicitous for their outſide, have generally very little care for their better part within;

within ; and it is moſt certain, that the next thing to Vanity, is Vice ; Extravagance in one kind multiplying it ſelf to others, and ending at the laſt in the moſt open irregularities. Nor is it a wonder, ſo many Farmers now adays ſhould break, and throw up their bargains, ſince there are ſo few, who live as Farmers ſhould do, with induſtry and thriſt.

Sect. 45. And whilſt I adhere to my Calling, without departing from it, and avoid the diverſions of medling in the vocations or concerns of others ; I alſo decline, as much as honeſtly I may, theſe

theſe more legal Avocations of being imployed as a Pariſh-Officer, a Conſtable, Tything-man, Church-Warden, and the like. Where, beſides the trouble and expence of the Employment, there is a great hazard of diſpleaſing my Neighbours, and a greater of offending Almighty God, for in them I muſt take a Corporal Oath to preſent all miſdemeanours and offences, that come to my knowledge; who keep diſorders in their Houſes; who frequent ſuch places; who abſent themſelves from Divine Service; and in a time, when there are ſo many Papiſts, ſo many Fanaticks,

ticks, Atheists, and Drunkards in every Township and Parish, it is impossible with any pretence to truth or common honesty, to bring in the usual return, that all things are well and in good order. Not many years since, I was chosen Church-Warden, and seeing that there was no remedy, but serve I must (it being just I should bear my share of burdens;) The first thing I did, was to declare openly, that I would return all persons without favour or connivence, according to my Articles. Nor was I worse than my word; presenting the rich as well as the poor, the

the Popiſh and prophane as well as Fanatick Recuſant: And was for my pains rail'd at as a buſie, ſtrait-lac'd Hypocritical Rogue, an Unneighbourly, troubleſom Fellow, with a great deal of the like ill Language. But notwithſtand, I live, I thank God, ſtill, and am as well thought on in the Pariſh, as thoſe, who for quietneſs ſake, forſwore themſelves, and choſe rather to partake of other mens ſins, than of their diſpleaſure or ill will.

Sect. 46. But with much more willingneſs I undertook the Office of Overſeer of the Poor, and the conſtant trouble

trouble which went with it; conſidering that, ſince by reaſon of my low condition, I had little means of being charitable and contributing to the relief of thoſe, that were in diſtreſs; I had the greater obligation, not to be ſparing of my care and pains in their behalf. And one particular way, wherein I did befriend them, was, to pay the ſeveral allowances punctually at the weeks end; for I obſerved that diſappointment of a day or two was a great oppreſſion to them, who had only from hand to mouth, and who muſt either beg or ſteal, if they happened not to have their relief at the

the time, when it was due; and therefore I rather wanted money my ſelf, or borrowed it for them, than ſee them lack. And, when I conſider that the proceeding of the Day of Judgment is deſcribed by our Saviour, as depending upon the having fed the hungry, cloathed the naked, and viſited the ſick and otherwiſe diſtreſſed; I cannot but reſolve it of exceeding great importance, to be enabled to make a Plea to the performance of theſe Duties: The having not done them to our Neighbour, being by our Lord expreſly ſaid, The Refuſal of them unto him himſelf.

sect.

Sect. 47. Though hitherto I have in many words given an account of my own Actions and Concernments, which may juſtly lay me open to the charge of Impertinence and Folly (The ſpeaking of ones ſelf being generally an effect of want of Wit:) Yet, if I find any good done by this Attempt, I have ſome other things to offer to my Generation. For I moſt willingly profeſs, I am a Fool; and, if I ſee cauſe, will yet further be a Fool, for Chriſt his ſake, and for the good of his little Ones. And thinking it reaſonable that the diſcourſings of an unlearned man, ſhould have the ſame

ſame effect among thoſe of the ſame Level, as the reaſonings of great Clerks among Scholars; and hoping that God, who magnifies his ſtrength in weakneſs, may give a bleſſing to my ſlender endeavour; I cannot repent of the trouble I have given my ſelf in this Adventure, till I ſhall diſcern it utterly unuſeful to Plain Countrymen, ſuch as I am, and for whom, if not only, yet chiefly, it was deſigned. In the mean time, I hope Almighty God will accept the Will for the Deed, and forgive the failing, not only of this writing, but of my whole life too. The which Prayer

I have reaſon with the greater fervency to make, being now drawing towards my long home, and ſpeedily to render an account of whatever has been done or omitted by me, ſince I came into the World. At which great Day, it will not be inquired how Rich, or how Honourable, but how Religious and Honeſt I have been; nor ſo much how Prudentially, as how Piouſly, Juſtly, and Soberly I have lived. God grant I may then appear faithful in the Huſbandry of that Talent, which hath been committed to my Truſt; That, though I am an unprofitable Servant, yet my